

The Psychosocial Team at BCCFA encompasses three programs: Key Worker Support Services (Burnaby), Family Counselling Support Services (Burnaby and New Westminster) and the Stepping Stones Program (Burnaby, Richmond, Vancouver, North Shore)

Happy Back-to-School Psychosocial families!

We hope that the first few weeks of fall have been going well for you and your families and back to school has been successful in whatever form that looks like for your family.

This can be an especially difficult transition time with uncertainty and following an extended period of time away from regular routine and school.

The BC Centre for Ability continues to provide virtual services via phone, email and video conferencing and we encourage you to reach out to your Psychosocial team member with questions and for support.



Signs of Depression During the Pandemic

Depression is more than just feeling sad or having bad days. A child who seems to be stuck in a negative mood — feeling hopeless and not able to enjoy anything — may have depression and may need help to bounce back.

Be aware of the signs of depression

Depression can be easy to miss and with sadness and irritability understandably widespread during this crisis, the signs can be even easier for family members to overlook.

Symptoms to look out for:

- Unusual sadness or irritability, persisting even when circumstances change
- Loss of interest in activities; reduced feelings of anticipation
- Changes in weight
- Shifts in sleep patterns
- Sluggishness
- Harsh self-assessment (“I’m ugly. I’m no good. I’ll never make friends.”)

Steps that can help to engage your child if they are experiencing depression:

- Stay active.
- Keep a sense of perspective - Help your child avoid exaggerating or obsessing on how bad things are right now.
- Tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity - Mindfulness practices can help your child resist obsessing on frightening possibilities and accept the uncertainty of the moment.
- Challenge negative thoughts.
- Make plans.
- Make new goals with your kids. When you’ve lost something valued in your life, as we all have lately, it helps to find something to replace it.
- Focus on gratitude.

Help kids feel comfortable talking about feelings

- Make time to sit down and explore how they’re doing. Kids may need a little prompting.
- If a child is experiencing sadness or depression, take some time to talk about why.
- When kids do share, validate their feelings by listening to them without judgment, and without trying to “fix” them. Let them know that you hear them (without agreeing with what they’re saying) and you’re there for them.
- For example, “That sounds really hard. I love you, I’m sorry you’re feeling sad.”

Content from: <https://childmind.org/article/signs-of-depression-during-coronavirus-crisis/>

5 ways to Help Children Focus on What they Can Control

1. Teach Accountability:



Create tasks that each family member can be responsible for.

2. Create a Circle of Control:

Make a visual depiction of what they do and do not have power over.



3. Practice Mindfulness:

Explain that we can't always control what happens to us but we do control how we respond to it.

4. Praise Effectively:

Effective praise is one of the simplest ways to help children gain more confidence.



5. Understand the Power of Choice:

Allowing children to make important decisions about their lives is crucial for their mental and physical health.



THINGS I CAN CONTROL

#1 BEING GRATEFUL FOR WHAT I HAVE	#9 Treating others with kindness and respect	#17 How often I say "Thank you"
#2 How I spend my free time	#10 HOW MUCH EFFORT I PUT INTO THINGS	#18 MY MINDSET
#3 Getting enough sleep	#11 Learning from my mistakes	#19 Trying again
#4 BEING IN THE HERE AND NOW	#12 LEARNING FROM FEEDBACK	#20 WORKING TOWARD MY GOALS
#5 Talking about my feelings	#13 How I respond to challenges	#21 Taking mindful breaths
#6 Asking for help	#14 Having a positive attitude	#22 Trying new things
#7 Spending time outside	#15 HOW I CONTRIBUTE TO MY FAMILY	#23 Taking a break when needed
#8 BEING KIND AND LOVING TO MYSELF	#16 Celebrating small wins	#24 REMINDING MYSELF THAT I AM ENOUGH
	#25 Finding the good in any situation	

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file:///C:/Users/Dana.seidel/Downloads/Things%20You%20Can%20Control%20-%20Big%20Life%20Journal.pdf

Mental Wellness for Parents

Mental wellness comes from feeling balanced, connected to others and ready to meet life's challenges. Children returning to school during such an uncertain, difficult time can have an impact on mental wellness for both them and their parents.

As a parent, if you find yourself talking to your spouse, a friend, family member or even a neighbour about your thoughts and fears around this health crisis? Or maybe, about your concerns around school? These are all realistic concerns and you are likely going to need to talk them through with someone but, be aware of the impact your own anxieties, fears or musings may have on the little ears that are always listening!

With that being said, it's important for parents to focus on mental wellness promotion and prevention by addressing small concerns before they become bigger issues. It's important for parents to care for themselves in addition to caring for their children.

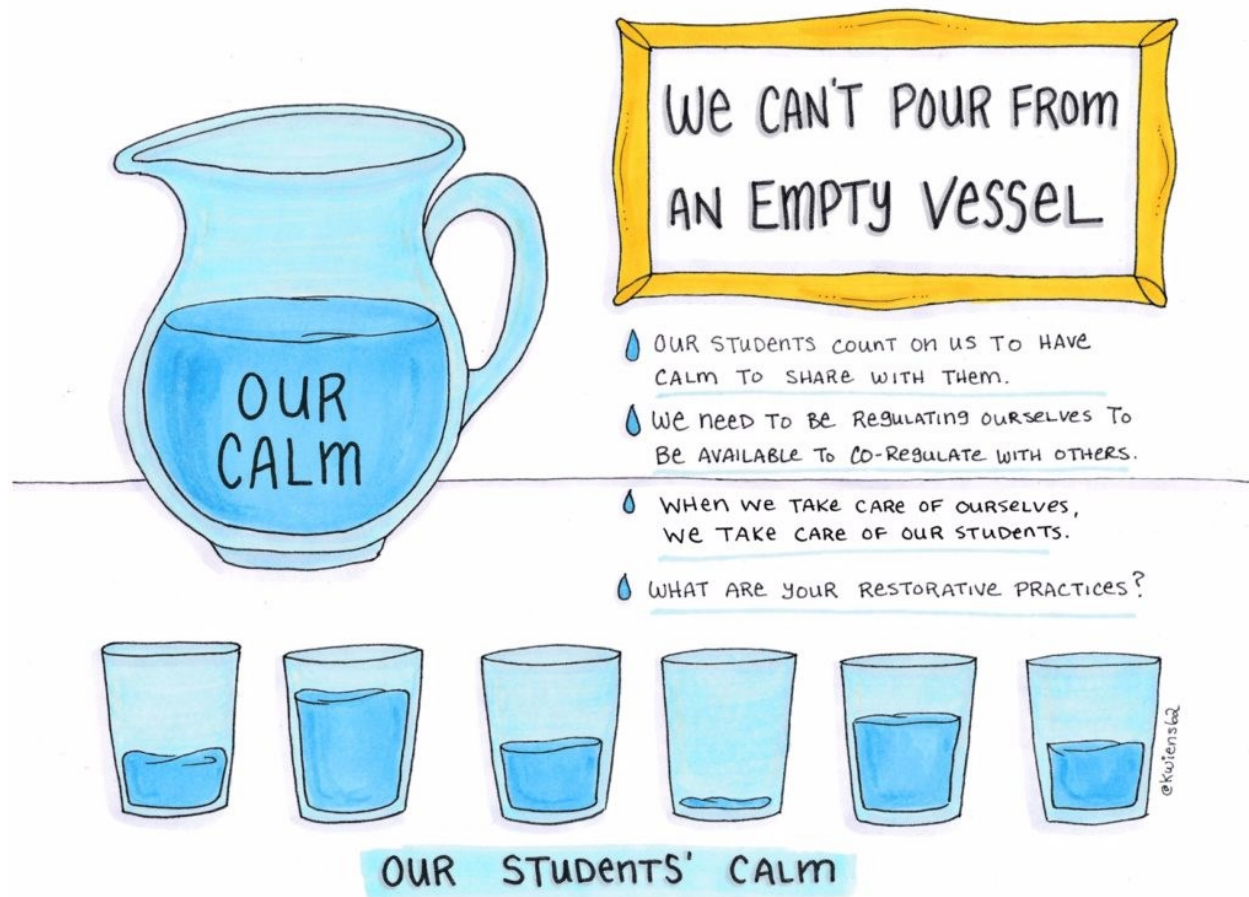


Image from: <https://northstarpairs.com/graphics-free-downloads/>

Calming Strategies for Adults to Promote Mental Wellness

Focus on The Senses 5,4,3,2,1

- Find 5 things you can see.
- Find 4 things you can touch.
- Find 3 things you can hear.
- Find 2 things you can smell.
- Find 1 thing you can taste.

Embrace The Arts

- Color or draw.
- Look through recipes.
- Listen to a calming playlist.
- Play an instrument.
- Sing.

Move

- Take a walk.
- Do a few yoga poses.
- Jump on a trampoline.
- Run in place.

Connect to Nature

- Go outside and walk barefoot through the grass.
- Sit outside in a relaxed lotus position: legs crossed, hands with palms open on knees. Do slow, deep breathing.

Nurture

- Water plants.
- Clip dead leaves.
- Gather seeds for growing or sharing.
- Pick flowers.
- If you have a garden, pick fruits or veggies or weed.

Calming Strategies for Adults

Control The Environment to Calm The Senses

- Turn down the lights for a few minutes.
- Turn on soothing music or sounds.
- Light a scented candle; watch the flame.
- Wrap yourself like a burrito in a regular or weighted blanket.
- Drink ice water or go warm with hot tea.
- Give yourself a mini hand massage with a fragrant lotion.

Connect with The Animal Kingdom

- Watch fish in an aquarium.
- Do bird watching.
- Pet your furry family members.
- Fill bird feeders and see who comes to the seed buffet.
- Take a few minutes with a journal outside and track the creatures you observe.

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Image from: Big Life Journal; <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uI-ysnpQo0DztegyaKcDmiRwjS1Yu1sN/view>

Personal Resiliency Tips During the COVID-19 Pandemic

It's essential to take care of yourself, not just for your well-being, but also for those you care about and support. Your self-care will help improve your energy, focus, ability to cope with challenges and overall life experience.



Nourish yourself and be mindful of the foods you choose and how much water you drink. Food and water fuel us for the day.

Sleep. Sleep is critical to physical and mental health. . If you wake and have trouble returning to sleep, you could try taking some deep breaths and visualizing calm relaxing moments to give your brain a rest.



Stay active. Physical activity can enhance your energy, immune system, and mood. While you may have to be a bit creative at the moment, you can achieve these benefits with 30 minutes of sustained physical activity around your home.



Reflect

Be mindful of your thoughts and feelings, both positive and negative, as part of your self-care.



Be committed.

Prioritize your self-care and persist with this, even when life gets challenging.

Stay connected. Maintaining connection with others can help to enhance your sense of well-being. Even when we're practicing physical distancing, we can all find ways to connect, engage, and reach out to others during this time.



Be gentle. Pay attention to how you talk to yourself. Treat yourself with compassion and gentleness, as you would a dear friend.



Pause. Do your best to find a little time for yourself each day to do whatever allows you to feel relaxed, restored and ready to meet the challenges ahead.



Content from: <https://smho-smso.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/TipSheet-Personal-Resiliency-During-Covid19-ENG.pdf>

Limited Testing Opportunity

The BC CFA is excited to be involved in testing for a new product, Blue.



We are looking for eager volunteer to participate in testing, and help fine tune Blue for the families we serve.

Blue is a community assistant – half volunteer coordinator, half crowdfunder, its job is to keep a family connected to their village of supporters.



Jess needs a ride at 10am. Can you help?

No

Yes

If you've ever wished your friends and family helped out more, or if they have offered and you've never taken them up on it, Blue may be the perfect solution for you.



Awesome! I'll connect you!

More about the company: <https://caregiversupport.tech>

More about the program:

- You need a smartphone with an internet connection to use Blue
- You will be asked to complete 2 surveys in the first 2-3 months
- You will continue to have access to Blue for free for as long as you like

Please contact Allyson Clark at Allyson.Clark@bc-cfa.org for more information or to join the program.



Psychosocial Team Program Updates

Ongoing support during COVID-19:

In following the BC Centre for Ability's return to work plan, the Psychosocial team, along with the rest of the Centre, is continuing to provide virtual services via phone, email and video conferencing.

Due to the current circumstances in-person groups and workshops continue to be on hold.



The team will continue to provide updates regarding upcoming groups and workshops when they are safe to resume. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact your Psychosocial team.

Upcoming Groups & Workshops

Virtual Parent Networking Group

Being offered via Zoom.

Upcoming Dates:

October 20 and November 25, 2020

Time:

5:00—6:30pm

For More Information or to RSVP:

Contact Margot or Dana



You and Your Kindergartener

Workshop

Being offered via Zoom.

Workshop Date:

September 30, 2020

Time:

5:00—6:30pm

For More Information or to RSVP:

Contact Margot



Psychosocial Team Staff



Dana Seidel-
Key Worker
Support Services



Margot Merinsky-
Stepping Stones Program



Lena Gilbert-
Family Counselling
Support Services

We want to hear from you!

We are always looking for feedback and welcome your input. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about any aspect of our Program's services, please call or email us.

Program staff can be reached as follows:

**Lena Gilbert, CYSN Family Counsellor, 778-887-3010 or
Lena.Gilbert@bc-cfa.org**

**Dana Seidel, Key Worker, 604.451.5511 x 1257 or
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